

ENTICE Project Summary:

Local food and drink has increasing prominence as an economic driver of business. It gives destinations an extra layer of distinctiveness to attract tourists and assists with international efforts to cut carbon emissions through curbing food miles and using foods when in season. Encouraging more understanding of this important sector therefore has many benefits. This project will bring 20 UK based hospitality and tourism training professionals to visit Iceland. There they will learn about special initiatives to promote traditional foods, co-operative business marketing and tourism promotions that encourage greater understanding and increased economic benefits for participating businesses.

Over the course of the visit, the participants will see how various cluster groups have formed and the impact they are achieving. They will hear from organisers of farmers' markets and farm shops and developers of food festivals and gastro-tourist itineraries to encourage greater awareness and understanding. And they will learn from restaurants and chefs about the importance of sourcing and promoting local food menus. Most importantly they will gain an appreciation of the growing desire for authentic local experiences and the important role cuisine can play in that. Everyone should be able to take ideas back to their workplace which can be developed, implemented or improved depending on individual circumstances. We will be encouraging participants to research a speciality of their location and to give it prominence, or possibly to re-introduce it to menus wherever possible.

Iceland has a rich and varied cuisine with a colourful international reputation for some of the more traditional tastes enjoyed locally. The group will learn about the techniques employed by fellow hospitality and tourism professionals to get beyond these perceptions whilst ensuring the excellent public relations value of eating 'rotting shark' is maintained to their distinct advantage. What is it that makes Icelandic lamb, or Icelandic seafood for example, taste so special? How can you encourage people to engage with more traditional ingredients (e.g. skyr) for a positive experience? We will also cover examples using presentation of foods e.g. soup served inside a locally baked bread loaf, using food and drink trails to bring buyers to suppliers and some innovative social media applications being developed and used with increasing success.

Due to the general weather conditions and the academic commitments of our receiving partner Holar University College, the visit is expected to take place in early autumn 2012 or late spring 2013. Travelling distances in Iceland can be lengthy so to maximise the benefit to participants we would look to concentrate the itinerary in South Iceland where much good development work on food and drink is already underway.

This project will allow participants the opportunity to visit a country which is focussing on the use of traditional and local foods as part of its sustainable tourism strategy and learn from best practice examples, listen to experts and participate in workshops and share knowledge. This learning can then be taken back into the workplace and developed to allow the business to be more competitive and provide a better experience for the customer.